Suggestions

ON

CLERICAL ELOCUTION.

W. HUGHES, Printer,
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DEDICATED TO THE RIGHT REVEREND THE LORD BISHOP OF CHICHESTER.

SUGGESTIONS

ON

CLERICAL ELOCUTION:

BY

JOHN LETTICE, D.D.

PREBENDARY OF CHICHESTER, VICAR OF PEASMARSH, SUSSEX, AND CHAPLAIN TO HIS GRACE THE DUKE OF HAMILTON.

Ἐφανέρωσε δὲ, καιροῖς ἰδίοις, ἐν Κηρύγματι τὸν λόγον αὐτοῦ.—Tit. i. 3.

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REBOUND INK

DEDICATION.

TO THE RIGHT REVEREND

THE LORD BISHOP OF CHICHESTER.

My Lord,

May an aged clergyman of your Lordship's diocese be permitted to ask your protection of an attempt to be useful to students in our Universities, preparing themselves for holy orders; and, it may be, to such, as have already not long embraced the clerical profession.

As Author of the following "Suggestions on Clerical Elocution," I am happy

in having been many years situated in your Lordship's diocese, and in having occasionally enjoyed opportunities of correcting and improving my own practice in performing the services of the Church, from the example of your Lordship's noble and energetic delivery of sermons and visitation charges, addressed to your clergy; written, as they were, in an impressive style of elegant and authoritative simplicity.

That "Clerical Elocution" has been too little cultivated as an art, and one, not the most easily acquired, till after the time its correct practice is justly expected to be exhibited in public, affords matter of serious reflection.

Since your Lordship's example has not ceased to recommend it, and its value must have been duly estimated in the diocese of Chichester, may not the Author of these humble "Suggestions" on the

subject, entertain a hope, that, under your patronage, they may contribute something towards its attainment in those, whose age is little maturer than their clerical experience? They may possess brilliant talents and much academical learning, and must be possessed of a creditable share of theological knowledge, to have been admitted into holy orders; and may yet feel the want of considerable improvement in "Elocution." This acquisition must be progressive; and will not be made without resolution and perseverance. The young student having for some time zealously exerted himself to attain it, will not then have to apply, in his own case, the poet's mortifying expression of disappointment—

"——— Multùm sudet, *frustraque* laboret
"Ausus idem."

Under the sanction of your Lordship's

venerable name and exalted station in the Church, many of its respectable elders, till something more perfect shall be offered by abler hands, may be induced to recommend these "Suggestions" to the notice of younger Clergymen, their assistants in the duties of their benefices.

That, in the high estimate I have made of your Lordship's countenance of my humble labours, I stand clear of all interested motives, it will be believed, when I declare myself to have been long perfectly contented with a situation in the Church of very moderate emolument, and that I have refused to exchange a stall in the Church of Chichester, conferred upon me solely as matter of distinction, for another, prospectively lucrative, offered me by your Lordship's kindness. I can, then, have no view, apart from the attention I wish to be given to these "Suggestions on Clerical

Elocution," but to express the disinterested respect and veneration, with which I beg to subscribe myself,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's

Dutiful and obliged humble Servant,

JOHN LETTICE.

PREFACE.

THAT, which on many occasions and in many circumstances would appear in no better light than affectation, vanity or parade, may in some particular cases, become necessary to prevent mistakes, false representations, or unfair judgments. A wider or more extended application of the following "Suggestions on Clerical Elocution," than that intended by their Author, might draw upon him, and justly, the imputation of presumption. Could it be imagined, he meant, indiscriminately, to instruct the sacred order

at large, that vast body of men, the Clergy of the British empire, themselves the teachers or instructors, in one situation or other, of almost half the christian world, what instance could be found of more heedless temerity? The regularly educated Clergy of Great Britain and Ireland may safely be pronounced the best instructed order of men in the world; and, when we consider their numbers, various destinations and employments in the character of tutors, public or private, are more instrumental in communicating and diffusing knowledge, both human and divine, than any other class of men existing. Respecting human knowledge, they are, in the province of schoolmasters and tutors, the teachers of first principles and elements to nearly every other profession, equally with their own. From them and their families, originally, it is, that have arisen

too, in the female sex, most of the teachers and instructors of the better orders of their own sex. This being the fact, what individual clerk of the sacred order, in his senses, could have the presumption, in any particular article of knowledge, human or divine, to set himself up as the general instructor of his own order? No: far has been any such thought from the Author of the following "Suggestions." Many there are among the elders of his own profession better qualified than himself to have given hints and intimations on "Clerical Elocution." Fortunate will he be, should his own humble attempt give rise, hereafter, to something like a formal system of instruction on this important subject, as it respects speaking or reading in the different offices of the Church, and on theological composition as connected with them; and addressed to all members of the sacred order, who

may not have had due opportunities of considering the subject in all its practical points of view.

But let it be candidly understood, that these "Suggestions" are directly, and almost wholly addressed to students preparing themselves for the Church. If added to these, our younger Clerks, admitted Deacons, may be induced to peruse, and should find them worthy of attention, the Author will have obtained all his ambition has, or ought to have, aimed at; sensible as he is of his inability, from the infirmities of age and other reasons, to produce any thing approaching a formal code for clerical instruction on the subject before him.

But now it will naturally be asked, what his pretensions are for having ventured even upon these *hints* and *intimations* on the subject; and he seems obliged to state them. At the first step,

he must beg indulgence for any little lapse of self-love, into which the deceitfulness of the heart may but too probably betray him, with all his desire to avoid it. As far as facts are concerned, he fears no transgression of truth; but of these he may introduce or allude to some, which cooler spirits might have suppressed.

His father, a learned and much-respected Clergyman, left the Author, in the fourteenth year of his age, under the guardianship of an uncle, an eminent divine, and greatly admired by the University of Oxford as a preacher. The preference of his ward, then at a public school, had been early, by free choice, determined to the Church; the profession of his ancestors for several generations, both on the side of his father and mother. His uncle, just mentioned, had for several years educated with his own

sons,* a considerable number of private pupils, with great reputation. At his

* Two of these gentlemen, the writer's first cousins, died—one, Bishop of St. Asaph, and the other, Archbishop of Dublin. The eldest of the three, who finished his school education at Westminster, was declared, by Archbishop Markham, the master in his time, the best scholar he had ever sent from that grand seminary. Had he not died soon after having taken one of the Christchurch livings in the north of England, *he* too might, not very improbably, have been advanced to the episcopal bench; having had powerful friends, with every personal recommendation. The three brothers were very learned and distinguished preachers. Were not the writer's bias toward the Church, and his wish to perform its duties with effect, likely to have been strengthened by his connexion with the "Cleavers," on his father's side, he might mention, that his mother, a "Newcome," was nearly related to Dr. Newcome, who died Bishop of St. Asaph, about sixty years since; to whom the writer was known, and allowed to expect benefit from his patronage, had he lived longer. Dr. Newcome, the late Primate of Ireland, to whom he had been introduced by the Bishop of St. Asaph, acknowledged the writer his relative, and sent him, through his late lamented friend, Mr. J. Haw-

house the author passed most of his school and college vacations, and found his guardian's attention very particularly directed to cultivate a distinct, elegant and emphatic manner of speaking and reading in all his pupils; nor were any means neglected to strengthen the voice and improve its clearness in those of his scholars designed for the pulpit or the bar; his own natural voice being of the first excellence in tone and energy. This most worthy of men, who was ever disposed to use his faculties for the benefit

kins Browne, in the year 1795, his "Observations on the New Testament," accompanied with that flattering acknowledgment. With these family connexions, and under the circumstances noticed above in the text, it will scarcely be doubted, that the Author of the following Suggestions must have turned his thoughts to a proper performance of the clerical office, and he trusts he has not entirely neglected the opportunities and examples so often before him, of acquiring some share of knowledge and practice requisite for that purpose.

of all within his reach, was not likely to have omitted his valuable advice on any of the preceding articles to a relative, his ward, in whom too he found some predilection for them. Nor had this predilection been unattended to by his own schoolmaster, the reverend Mr. Powel; who had been an usher at Westminster School, and who taught according to the methods then and there adopted.

Will the Author now be judged to overstep all modesty and propriety in saying, that when he entered at college, he was not thought to have totally lost or disgraced the opportunities he had found of improvement under his accomplished and venerable guardian? And could his self-love be pardoned, were he to lengthen this apologetic preface by adding, that he was frequently obliged, while Fellow of the Society whence he holds his Vicarage in Sussex, to appear

before the University as a preacher; and that, when a project, more than forty years since, was started, of selecting twelve preachers, to supply the turns of members of the University not in residence, in order to exclude two or three individuals, of inferior talents, who constantly watched for their turns, to the general "ennui" of their academic audience, the Author of these Suggestions was fortunate enough to have been one of those who were thought of in the proposed selection. But this project of academical distinction, after having been some time canvassed by those, on whom its adoption depended, was considered of too invidious a nature, and it fell to the ground. Whether it has ever been taken up again, since his connexion with the University has ceased, he knows not.

But should none of the foregoing reasons be candidly admitted for the liberty

he has taken in offering these "Suggestions" to the consideration of students preparing themselves for holy orders, and of some of his youngest brethren in the Church, its reverend Deacons, the sanction of his venerable Diocesan's approval may be safely relied on, to protect him from censure or reproach in any quarter whatever.

PUBLICATIONS BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

1. The Conversion of St. Paul; Seaton's Prize Poem. 1765.

2. Antiquities of Herculaneum, jointly with Professor Martyn. 1773.

3. Tour in Scotland. 1794.

4. Translation of J. Hawkins Browne's Poem on the Immortality of the Soul. 1795.

5. The Village Catechist, addressed to the Inhabitants of Peasmarsh. 1803.

6. Plan of Removals of Persons and Property from the Coasts, on the threatened Invasion of England. 1804.

7. Fables for the Fireside. Second Edition. 1813. Mr. Clarke, New Bond-street.

8. Academical and Visitation Sermons.

N. B. All the above, the 7th excepted, are out of print.

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INTRODUCTION.

THE increasing numbers of a religious sect, whose characteristic opinions are, in some respects, not inconsiderably at variance with the doctrines of the Established Church, while they continue reckoning their yearly additions, though probably with little accuracy, by tens and twelves of thousands, cannot but be thought matter of serious concern to every friend of our ecclesiastical establishment.

It is true, that a large portion of the people who follow the sect alluded to,

still continue some connexion with the Church, and will, it is likely, be encouraged by their leaders to do so from the fear of creating alarm, till their numbers may, hereafter, be sufficiently augmented, to assume a more independent attitude, and to stand alone. But may not this half-connexion itself be a just object of some degree of apprehension? Since the difference between the two parties in religious sentiments is wide, and distinctly enough marked out, would not a total desertion of the Church by the sect in question have been more natural than this suspicious halting betwixt adherence and apostacy? Why this seeming indecision, then, among the Methodists, who pretend, or affect to pretend, *that the Gospel is not preached in the Church?*— Was there no reason to suppose, that, in the unsettled state of public opinion, during the prevalence of democracy in

the French Revolution, which then manifested itself in our country, that many, or, as some thought, a majority of this sect, as well as of some others, had no ill will to that political bias? Was nothing of this sort ever heard to mingle itself about that time with the harangues of their preachers? Was any forbearance then, however little or much at present, observed in their reflections on the envied splendour of our hierarchy, and of the maintenance of the clergy by tithes? Were not such remarks listened to with itching ears by too many among the inferior tenantry of the kingdom?

Though the revolutionary spirit was considerably damped in our country by the terrible and lasting effects it produced on the Continent, yet these particular topics are supposed still not to have lost their charm, when decorated with the eloquence of the self-constituted preachers

of the methodistical circles. That the difference, therefore, betwixt the establishment and this sect, is not wholly confined to religion, is little to be doubted; and a time may come, should their numbers, strength and consequence reach a certain point, when their political, may be more decidedly announced than their religious sentiments. Although nobody can hold in greater abhorrence a spirit of religious persecution, or more cordially approve that liberal toleration conceded by our laws, than the author of these pages, he wishes means, not inconsistent with this catholic spirit, could be found, of bringing back the well-meaning, no inconsiderable portion of these schismatics, and of fixing them quietly again within the precincts of the Church.

As consumptions weaken the natural body, so any thing tending to considerable defection from a community, eccle-

siastical or civil, has the same kind of effect; and such a quantity of vital strength, in the course of time, may thus be lost to either, as to menace its safety, and forerun destruction.

A palliative, indeed, was applied not long since, in the obligation required by the legislature to a stricter clerical residence. This has been advantageous, inasmuch, at least, as it has contributed to quash the loud tone of declamation against the Church among those, who are ill disposed to its cause. But that it has prevented, or considerably lessened defection, or brought back any who had entirely deserted its pale, there seems little reason to conclude, while the sect alluded to continue to calculate any such yearly accessions as above intimated, to the aggregate of their established *circles*. That this compulsive measure of residence hath been found, in some degree, to

answer the good intentions of government, more immediately in view, must be admitted; and moreover as far as a number of young Clerks of better families or higher connexions, shall have been compelled by their Diocesans to change an idle, fashionable or dissipated life in the capital for residence on their benefices, its good effect cannot be denied; and a just matter of reprehension has been removed from the Church. But in cases, which may sometimes have happened notwithstanding great episcopal vigilance, where a Rector or Vicar, whose powers of voice, and best exertions, have been unequal to his own large church, has been obliged to quit a small one, where he had preached to the contentment and edification of his hearers, and has been ordered to residence upon his own benefice, where he has assumed the place of his own well-chosen deputy, who possessing the advantage, *there*

indispensable, of much superior strength of lungs, had given its just intonation to the liturgy, and conveyed the doctrines of the pulpit to every member of his congregation,—more detriment than advantage must have resulted from the change.

But some disadvantage, in the size and construction of many of our churches, must yet be admitted, and this, one which leaves the dissenters* and seceders from our communion in possession of the best, if not the only reasonable argument they can urge for their apostacy; namely, that in our largest churches the strongest voices may sometimes have failed to reach individuals situated in the extreme parts of such churches, and that they are not always heard even at smaller distances, where the

* Under the word *dissenter* the author never alludes to the established Church of Scotland; whose presbytery is maintained by a Clergy of as much talent, learning, and respectability, as any Church in the world.

sound is intercepted by massive pillars;* whereas the dimensions of their places of worship, rarely containing half the space of a large church, admit the performer's voice to be every where heard. May so much suffice to introduce what I would now beg to intimate under the title of "Suggestions on Clerical Elocution."

* It is holden by those who have attended to the doctrine of acoustics, that the most sonorous voice cannot be well and distinctly heard by more than 2000 persons, and by those, where it is not obstructed by massive pillars.

SUGGESTION I.

Effective Power of Speech may be acquired.

In most of our great classical seminaries youth are taught that, which, in none of them, ought to be omitted—the making of Latin verses, as the only sure method of their learning the true quantity or correct accent of all the words in that language, whether in poetry or prose, but without any intention or wish to make them poets; if, indeed, that were possible without native genius. The noble faculty of genius seems equally necessary to produce that splendid cha-

racter,* a perfect orator. But since a proper and effective manner in the public delivery of any thing perspicuously written, and justly adapted to its occasion, by which we may *largely* define, not oratory, but *elocution*, is an indispensable requisite in every scholar bred to the clerical profession, it is truly a matter of deep concern to the Church, where this requisite is found wanting. Nor can any excuse be admitted for the failure, where the organs of speech are perfect. Where they are not, how greatly is it to be lamented, that young persons, or their parents for them, should have chosen the sacred profession; or, whatever their scholarship or their talents, that they should have obtained ordination.

If "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God," may we

* A character, perhaps, never really known but in ancient Greece and Rome.

not apply the Apostle's questions preceding this his observation? "How shall "they believe in Him, of whom they "have not heard? How shall they hear, "without a preacher?"

If, now, from weakness of voice, too rapid a delivery, impediment of speech, or other cause, the whole of any congregation do not hear distinctly, or perhaps not hear at all, so as to understand the clerical performer, is he to them a preacher? And yet it has been a subject of constant complaint in many a church, where its size has furnished no plausible foundation for it, that the preacher, or rather *performer*, could not be properly and effectively heard. Now from what cause can this most serious deficiency have arisen, but the want of an audible and intelligible elocution? The sole case of a strong natural impediment of speech, which too frequently proves unconquer-

able, being admitted, all other obstacles to this acquisition may be removed by resolution and perseverance.

A clergyman now greatly advanced in years, and, in his youth, far from boasting any superior constitution or strength of lungs, set out with an early resolution at school of using regular exercise, cold bathing, and due exertion of voice in reading and speaking. He engaged in the duties of a very large church soon after his entrance into holy orders; and may, perhaps, be allowed to recollect, that individuals of his congregation, in the remotest seats of his church, assured him they were, not nominally, but really his *hearers*.

Affecting no higher pretensions than his continued practice, to his present age, of an effective elocution, according to his comprehensive definition above, he has sat down to consider the different

means of acquiring this indispensable requisite; and hopes he shall not be deemed presumptuous by his younger brethren in the sacred profession, and, particularly, by those still under preparation for it, in offering to their consideration this, and the following Suggestions on this important subject.

SUGGESTION II.

Improvement of Clerical Elocution.

SINCE we cannot but suppose the unprejudiced good sense of the people of England, brought up, with whatever want of education, in the national Church, disposed, in general, to prefer its venerable forms, its sober worship, and rational expositions of scripture by a learned clergy, to the fanatic ravings of illiterate laics, (wildly attributed, among some few of our sectaries,* to divine inspiration,) let us not suffer the numbers who have left, and continue falling off from the Church, whether partly, or decidedly, *because they*

* Such as the late Joanna Southcote, and other itinerant visionaries; whose sober relatives ought, in time, to provide for them in some lunatic asylum.

cannot hear the voice of its ministers, to remain irrevocably fixed to the sectarian chapel, if means can be found to remedy so grave a complaint, and that, in many cases, advanced with truth.

To what so directly, or with better hope, can we have recourse than the improvement of the grand engine of the clerical office, "Elocution?" There are few branches of a clergyman's professional duties of more importance to those whom he is *so sacredly called* to teach, than the *proper exertion of his voice* in performing the liturgy, and in the delivery of his discourses from the pulpit.

It has been, too justly, a subject of lamentation and wonder, that too little attention is directly paid to this article in the earlier stages of clerical education. The proper management of the voice, here so naturally insisted upon, is not meant to infer an absolutely unexception-

able propriety of manner in a clergyman's speaking or reading in church; an object, however, which cannot be overlooked in the progress of these Suggestions; but it solely respects clearness and energy of sound in the exertion of his vocal faculties. Where the voice fails in these two respects; or, to be more particular, where its intonation is hoarse, wavering or indistinct, and, moreover, defective in due force and loudness, the prime requisite, the *sine quâ non* of an efficient performance, either in the desk or the pulpit, is, so far as the failure extends, manifestly wanting; and so far the benefit of some part of an audience clearly frustrated. If individuals thus deprived and disappointed, in the public services of the Church, would have employed their time spent there, in prayer and religious reading at home, it were much better they should have remained there.

But that this unfortunate exclusion from a benefit due on one side, and expected on the other, is as frequently to be attributed to defect of voice or want of exertion in the young minister, as to the largeness of the church, or awkward situation of seats, is a fact admitting little doubt. Since, however, this defect in energy of voice is but in few cases an insuperable fault of nature, it is earnestly deplorable, that no effective methods of *bringing out the voice, and of perfecting its intonations, are regularly practised, as indispensable, in every scene of clerical education.* It being generally determined at an early period by parents or their sons, what profession they shall embrace, whenever their schoolmasters or tutors at college are informed, it is to be that of churchmen, the discipline of the voice should undoubtedly become an object in their education, and be attended to in every

lesson or lecture, whether read only, or memorially recited. It is, I believe, excepting the case when declamations at school or at college are pronounced, (an exercise among numbers much too seldom coming to the turn of individuals,) the custom of every class to surround the master's desk, or lecturer's table, at the distance, at most, of two or three feet from the person of either. No exertion whatever of the lungs can *here* be necessary, nor is it expected. Propriety of accent, emphasis and cadence may, it is true, and, it is probable, always do, share some part of the master's or tutor's attention to his pupils, while reading to him; and might they not equally do it at any distance, whence the voice can be heard? In order, then, to strengthen its power, would it not be manifestly advantageous, were pupils, designed for the Church, placed, while reading or reciting,

at a distance gradually increased from their preceptor's chair, in one lesson at least every day, till the interval between him and them should become the whole length of the school or lecture room?

But should it be objected, as perhaps with reason it may, that lessons so loudly pronounced as these must be, would interrupt the rest of the scholars or students in preparing their several tasks, might it not better answer the intended purpose of improvement, were schoolmasters to set apart one half hour every day, when these others were not employed, for the hearing of some elegant composition for the pulpit read by the particular set of pupils in question, when of a proper age, till the habit of a *slow*, *firm*, *distinct* and *loud intonation* should be completely acquired? The superior skill, which some in the succession would soon display, could not fail to excite emulation

in the rest; and they, who were still left at some distance behind their fellows, could not but at once become sensible of the disadvantageous contrast in their own performance.

That no loss of improvement, or of excellence once attained, might be risked, the practice should never be discontinued during the state of school pupilage. In large seminaries there might be occasion for more than one class of these clerical readers. Nor could the continuance of this practice be too strongly recommended till their entrance into holy orders, would their tutors at the Universities call upon this class of pupils for regular and stated exercises of the voice, nearly on the plan that had been adopted in their preparatory stages of education. The halls or chapels of the different colleges of Oxford or Cambridge would afford abundant scope for this exercise;

during which the tutor should be placed at one end of the room, and the pupils at the other; when an audience of senior academics might be requested to attend. From the halls and chapels might it not be advisable, that these parties should, in a private way, resort to some of the parish churches for this exercise; and at length to those very spacious ones appropriated to the University of either place?

It may seem almost a needless caution to intimate, that a gradation respecting dimensions in the different edifices resorted to, should be consulted. For the exertions to be used in strengthening the voice must, *in every way*, be gradual, from a due attention to health, as well as to vocal improvement. Were the voice to be raised at once from the ordinary pitch of conversation, or of reading to a company in a room of moderate dimensions,

to that which would be requisite to fill a church, it would become cracked and harsh, and lose all that is pleasing in human utterance, and merit no other description than that of screaming. How much must the late Mr. Fox, if aware of his own imperfection in this respect, have had to regret, that his voice had never been disciplined to gradual exertion: for when, after commencing a speech in a moderate pitch, he grew warm upon his subject, or if sentiments of indignation arose, his tones became absolutely squeaking, almost indistinctly rapid like scolding, and unpleasant to every sensible ear. By observance of the caution here suggested, the voice will gain very soon sufficient firmness and volume to fill any reasonable space. The object of every clerical orator should be to fill the largest space confined within walls; such, we mean, as is com-

monly occupied by our sacred buildings; under the uncertainty what degree of exertion his future situations in the Church may make necessary. Though able to make himself heard in the most spacious church, or even cathedral, he need not fear being too vociferous for the smallest: he will have little difficulty in commanding the lower tones of his voice at pleasure. But were it otherwise, in what country church, however small, would he be thought too loud by the lower orders of our people? They are accustomed to loud speaking; and constituting nine-tenths of every rural congregation, and most needing instruction, have every claim upon the preacher or reader, for what, either in manner or matter, can tend to their edification, and reasonable satisfaction. And who is ignorant, that what is deemed by those who are to be taught, the most pleasing

vehicle, is ever found the most successful? Should it happen, that a few individuals of better condition and good education, and who in country churches are constantly seated nearest the desk and pulpit, complain of the energy of his tones; it would be his business, by proper explanations in private, to reconcile their delicacy of hearing to the spiritual advantage and improvement of their inferiors; for even in the best cause a prudent man would willingly avoid giving offence to any body, however unfortunately fastidious.

SUGGESTION III.

THIS important faculty of voice may always be acquired, where health is not wanting, and nature has given a common share of strength to the lungs. It is, nevertheless, too far from being, at present, universally possessed, though it is, indeed, of the highest consequence to the furtherance of religion, and ought to be an indispensable requisite in every candidate for holy orders. It would be well, perhaps, if no one were admitted into the profession, who could not produce to the Bishop some testimony of his possessing it. But with great sub-

mission the Author would ask, why the venerable rulers of the Church might not demand actual proof, at the seasons of ordination, from all who come to be admitted Deacons? Why might not the candidates be obliged, each, to read from a rostrum placed in the hall of the episcopal residence, a few verses in the Greek Testament, which he had before translated to the examining chaplain? And might it not be as proper, as it would be an honourable distinction, to appoint the two candidates, whom the Bishop had thought the most efficient readers, one to perform the service of the desk, and the other that of the pulpit on the ordination Sunday, with a printed sermon of the Bishop's choice?

The due power of voice is that, of which the lowest persons in a church auditory are equally able to judge with the highest; and that, without which

the service of the Church can never be efficiently performed.

Although, for the sake of the more polished and better educated members of town congregations, and those of course in the metropolis, it were desirable that the officiating Clergy should, in addition to the great requisites loudness and energy of voice, be critically masters of reading; of a feeling and graceful utterance, and even of a moderate and chastised use of action, as distinguished from the passionate violence of theatrical gestures; these accomplishments are of secondary consideration, compared with the former. The former, loudness and energy, comprehending distinctness, (for they must never be separated,) are absolutely essential; and the success of the sacred ministry must fail, as far as *they* are wanting.

Though much of our concern on this

subject is with the lungs and windpipe, they being the organs of simple sound in the human system, no particular notice has yet been taken of natural defects, or of means of obviating them in the mouth, the tongue, or the lips, the proximate instruments of speech. For though Mr. Thelwall, in his Letter to Mr. Cline, asserts, "there are no instances of stam-"mering or difficulties of pronouncing "certain letters of the alphabet, &c. "which art and resolution cannot over-"come," there are so few persons labouring under them in a very marked degree, who think of embracing the profession of ministers of the Church, that it is needless to bring these cases under consideration in this Essay. Hasten we, therefore, to some minuter rules of great consequence towards enabling the lungs and windpipe to perform their proper offices; taking for granted that a due

aperture of the mouth, in every attempt but to speak plainly, and with the least confidence of self-possession, must be understood.

SUGGESTION IV.

Minuter Rules.

An upright posture of the body, and the habit of duly preserving it, are not matters of more necessary requisition in a soldier than in a good speaker. Without it the chest can never obtain its proper expansion, nor the lungs have room to play. It will be supposed, that erectness of the head, and a due elevation of the chin, are here comprehended in the uprightness of the body. Every one may demonstrate to himself, the necessity of this complete uprightness, if he would throw out his voice with unusual energy,

by finding it absolutely out of his power, to speak with ordinary force or clearness, while stooping his body, by bending the chest over the stomach, or projecting his chin; and still much less, if doing both at the same time.

But it is not enough to have acquired this habit, while standing firmly on the feet; for it will be impossible to preserve it, without resolutely practising it too, *while sitting*. Young men preparing themselves at college for any of the learned professions, if earnestly bent on their studies, fall naturally into sedentary habits, which too often continue through life. It were well that they were not *literally* such during their preparatory studies, and that, whether reading or writing, they would accustom themselves rather to stand, or sit at a high desk, than at a table; and, whenever occupied at the latter, they should resolutely avoid

the bad custom, general as it is, of leaning or rather hanging over it. Nothing can tend more to contraction of the chest, and consequent compression of the lungs, than this dangerous posture. Many a voice, naturally strong and sonorous, has been irretrievably spoiled by it. Nor let it be forgotten, that this serious effect cannot have been produced without almost equal injury to health.

Under this upright carriage of the whole person, the two internal organs of voice, *viz.* the lungs and the windpipe, may be brought, by proper discipline, to give their fullest quantity of sound; and that sufficient for the largest church, when skilfully managed. If, however, the general temperament be weak and nervous, nothing better can be recommended than the cold bath and daily exercise on horseback; both with unremitting perseverance till the constitution

be confirmed. Where that absolutely fails, the clerical profession, if not already entered into, ought no longer to be thought of. But since, with due expansion of the chest, free play of the lungs, an unobstructed windpipe and a healthy constitution, complete *energy* of voice will not yet be attained without skilful management, we proceed to explain in what *that* will consist.

SUGGESTION V.

Rules for perfecting the Energy of Sound in the Human Voice.

It was just intimated above, that energy and distinctness were, or ought to be, inseparable; by which was meant, that in speaking, the *latter* must be practised completely before the voice can be thrown out with any thing approaching to due energy. Distinctness, however, will never be truly gained, but on the previous condition of the most resolutely *slow and deliberate* manner of speaking and reading. Not words only, but syllables, will thus be perfectly formed, each by their proper organ, and kept properly

divided; so as to be more than doubtfully heard. This precision as to words can never be dispensed with; nor must any syllable be less certainly pronounced to the ear of a teacher* of elocution, while the learner's voice is under his discipline. With respect to words, they will be defectively uttered in the smallest assembly, unless every one be distinctly heard. Each monosyllable, therefore, must be fully formed by its own proper organ: it must by itself be a *whole* to every ear. What Horace says of a period well composed, whether in verse or prose, that it must be "teres atque rotundus," *terse and rounded*, is applicable to every individual word, before it can be pronounced with due energy of sound. The London cries, which may be called loud in the sense of

* Under this designation, how desirable it is, that we might reckon every schoolmaster and classical tutor in the kingdom!

hooting, hallooing or screaming, are, almost all, unintelligible to the ears of strangers; because the words are not perfectly formed in their respective organs, being rapidly and barbarously uttered, and without any thing like distinctness or energy, rightly understood.

To those who may be correcting a defective elocution without a master, we would suggest the necessity, which every lecturer would doubtless insist upon, of paying the strictest attention to the quantity of words in a period; so that, in the strongest protrusion of sound from the lungs, a due measure of it may be given to every member, which the period may happen to contain. It will then be indifferent whether the period be long or short, if it be skilfully read. Every part of it must be "certainly" though not "equally" heard. In the sinking, the raising, the sliding of the voice from a

lower to a higher tone, and vice versâ, all, imperceptibly guided by a natural modulation, will prevent no part of a period from being properly heard. Yet still all, though somewhat "unequally," must be heard; the sense will else be mutilated, or entirely lost. But why is the quantity of words in every period to be exactly observed? We answer, on account of the pauses, or suspensions of breath, which must, or may have place within each member, though the pause be shorter than at its termination. Consider the following passage of one period from Dr. Ogden's Sermon on Prayer. I will mark each pause of the breath by a vertical line, to distinguish them from the grammatical stops; these, whether commas, semicolons or colons, being only to designate the proper members of a period.

"You see, both what are the profes-
"sions| God condescends to make of his

" good will to men; and with what zea-
" lous importunity| pious persons at all
" times| have called upon him in prayer,
" by a multitude of titles| laying claim
" to his attention." The preacher will observe, that, in distinctly reading each member of this sentence, between comma and comma, or other stop, you are obliged to pause once or more, for a suspension of the breath about half, or somewhat more, than the proper time of stopping at a comma. You cannot otherwise read such a quantity of words without monotony, and consequently without losing all the agreeable varieties of modulation, besides fatiguing yourself in order to be heard throughout; if at last you succeed.

The dull soporific listlessness, which monotonous reading is ever found to diffuse over a whole congregation, ought to prove so mortifying, as to awaken the preacher's curiosity, to know what had

occasioned it, and to stimulate him to the correction of so great a fault; since it can be attended with no trivial failure of his sermon's proper effect, or that of the desk services, on his hearers, and should be regarded in the serious light of deficiency in the duty he owes to those around him.

Consistently either with any modulation of voice, or due loudness for a church of moderate size, it may be pronounced almost impossible to speak more than ten syllables in prose without some short pause, or suspension of breath: in verse we never speak so many, though not a single comma occur. These suspensions, however, are often nearly imperceptible, unless designedly watched; and then they will always have been found requisite, to have sustained the reader's, or speaker's voice at the due pitch. Let us make experiment on the following lines

of Milton, from book v. line 136; though any other passage in the "Paradise Lost" might serve as well. The suspensions at every comma can escape no one; but where they fall on words within a comma, I will mark them with vertical lines as above; not doubting, that whoever should read the passage to a company in a large room, would probably pause at the same intervals, if nicely directed by the sense; but, at any rate, would find himself obliged, to pause somewhere within the comma, and generally within ten syllables. Should the sense require the comma to be long, he would pause twice. It is needless to add, that pauses at all the stops, commas, semicolons, &c. must be as nicely made, as if the vertical line pauses were out of the question.

"So all was clear'd, and to the field they haste.
"But first, from under shady arb'rous roof |
"Soon as they forth were come | to open sight

" Of day-spring, and the sun, who, scarce upris'n,
" With wheels yet hov'ring | o'er the ocean brim,
" Shot parallel to the earth | his dewy ray,
" Discovering, in wide landscape, all the east
" Of Paradise | and Eden's happy plains,
" Lowly they bow'd, adoring."

Take another passage at v. 185—

" Ye mists and exhalations | that now rise
" From hill or streaming lake, dusky or grey,
" Till the sun paint | your fleecy skirts with gold,
" In honour | to the world's great author, rise,
" Whether to deck with clouds | th' uncolour'd sky,
" Or wet the thirsty earth | with falling show'rs,
" Rising | or falling, still advance his praise."

It is true, that in reading verse, most, if not all, persons do it slower than they read prose, whether alone or in company. But if a clergyman were never to read his sermons more rapidly than he would a poem in heroic verse, the rule would be a safe one. And it may be questioned, whether, if it were universally adopted, the impression of clerical discourses would

not be five-fold what it frequently is at present.

We come now to that which may be thought of light consequence to the propriety of Clerical Elocution; I mean the giving due, and almost emphatic audibility to the *closing* words of every period. On this article we scarcely hesitate to affirm, that out of twenty readers, clerks or laics, addressing a public assembly, fifteen are not distinctly heard on the three or four final words in a sentence, though it must frequently happen, that some of its preceding members, and sometimes whole sentences, are not intelligible without an audible cadence. Something at best is always lost, and disappointment felt on the hearer's part. Now this failure seldom proceeds from the voice not falling, as it ought, (unless where the period ends interrogatively,) but from the closing words not being

accompanied with the requisite degree of sound. The voice, in most of these instances, may have fallen properly; but the sound has been diminished with it; whereas, on the contrary, there can be no doubt, that it should have been augmented, in order that the close be heard equally with the foregoing parts. It is demonstrable in acoustics, that graver or lower sounds are naturally somewhat less audible, or, technically speaking, strike the tympanum of the ear less sensibly than higher or acute ones. No person of tolerable ear can listen a moment to a performer on any stringed or wind instrument of music, without at once acknowledging the truth of this position. What is to be done then? While nothing can be more natural, or right, than that the voice should sink at the close of a sentence, not interrogative, and the sound on *that* account will be somewhat less

heard, the cadence ought to gain in energy what it wants in acuteness. In a word, it ought to be louder than in any preceding part of the sentence, to be but distinctly heard. The cadence thus managed never fails to give spirit and grace to elocution. This effect cannot be more appropriately exemplified than by the close of a musical air on the piano-forte, harp or organ; when, though the piece through the several keys had been played in two parts only, the cadences in each key, which may be called the closes of each period of the air, are always emphatically made in full chords, or four parts; so that, although they are the lowest notes of each key, they are perfectly heard, and leave the ear at once satisfied and delighted.

That this important doctrine of cadences may be misunderstood by no young clerical *reader*, it shall be illus-

trated both in prose and verse. Two or three instances shall be first produced, where the main stress, respecting the sense of the period, rests on three or four words at the close.

"There was a time, when men had "little else but nature to go to; and "that is the proper time to look into, to "see what mere and unassisted nature "*can do in religion.*"—*Bishop Sherlock.*

"Nay, there are still nations under the "sun, who are, as to religion, in a *mere* "*state of nature.* Here, then, we may "hope to see natural religion *in its full* "*perfection.* For there is no want of "natural reason, nor any room to *com-* "*plain of prejudice or prepossession.* In "all other instances nature is the same "now that ever it was; and we are but "acting over again, the same part, that "our *ancestors acted before us.* Wisdom "and prudence and learning are now

" what they formerly were; nor can age
" shew human nature in any one charac-
" ter exalted beyond the examples, *which*
" *antiquity has left us.*"

Now, of these passages from Sherlock, could any one of them be understood, if the words in italics at each close were not heard, as well as the rest, which precede them? And too common it is with clerical readers, so to diminish the sound with the fall of the voice, that they are scarcely heard at all, and certainly not so as to be understood.

Whoever doubts the pitiful and senseless effect of closing a sentence with so little strength of sound, as not to make it understood, has only to read the above passages aloud, and leave the cadences unread, or only whispered. Nor let him forget, that the leaving almost any word in other parts of the period unheard, has the same effect as if *unread.* But

suppose the sense of the foregoing parts of a period, not at all to depend on the words which may close it, and that the last comma is a mere amplification, the same energy of sound, we have been recommending, is necessary; not only to make the close audible to the whole assembly addressed, but to give it that complete winding up, that finishing roundness, which an ingenuous mind feels with pleasure, on having certainly imparted it to any thing he is doing. Take a passage, for instance, from Sterne's Sermon on "Searching the Scriptures," where the closing comma of the second period is only an amplification.—"If "ever these persons I have been address- "ing myself to, can be persuaded to "follow the advice of the text, in "searching the Scriptures, the work of "their salvation will be begun upon its "true foundation. For, first, they will

" be insensibly led to admire the beautiful " propriety of their language. When a " favourable opinion is conceived of this, " next, they will more closely attend to " the goodness of the moral, and the " purity and soundness of the doctrines: " the pleasure of reading will be still " increased by that near concern, which " they will find themselves to have in " those many important truths, which " they will see so clearly demonstrated " in the Bible; *that grand charter of our* " *eternal happiness.*"

How flatly, and not roundly, as it ought, would the reading of this quotation terminate, if the falling tone of the voice on the last comma were not animated by proportionate loudness or energy.

Though I can hardly be persuaded, that the importance of always bestowing a full measure of sound on cadences, will not be admitted by all readers, who

have considered the subject, I am yet tempted to bring before mine the exordium of Milton's "Paradise Lost;" probably the most difficult passage in the whole poem to be properly read, as well on account of its cadences and pauses, (which latter are of course unmarked in the printing,) as of the length of the periods which it contains.

" Of man's first disobedience, and the fruit
" Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste |
" Brought death into the world | and all our woe,
" With loss of Eden, till one greater man
" Restore us, and regain the blissful seat,
" Sing | ' heav'nly Muse,' that on the secret top
" Of Oreb, or of Sinai, didst inspire
" That shepherd, who first taught the chosen seed
" In the beginning, how the Heav'n and Earth |
" *Rose out of chaos:* or, if Sion Hill
" Delight thee more, or Siloa's brook that flow'd |
" Fast by the oracle of God; I thence |
" Invoke thy aid | to my advent'rous song,
" That with no middle flight intends to soar
" Above th' Aonian mount; while it pursues |
" Things unattempted *yet* | *in prose, or rhyme.*

" And chiefly thou, O Spirit, that dost prefer,
" Before all temples | th' upright heart and pure,
" Instruct me, for thou know'st; thou from the first
" Wast present, and with mighty wings outspread,
" Dove-like sat'st brooding | o'er the vast abyss |
" And *mad'st it pregnant;* what in me is dark |
" Illumine; what is low | raise and support,
" That to the height | of this great argument |
" I may assert | Eternal Providence,
" And justify | *the ways of God to men.*"

Though a cadence can rarely take place at a comma, it seems very difficult to " invoke the Muse," where addressed in the above passage, without one, to read it with spirit and grace. Yet by a pause at " sing," we might manage to read " Heav'nly Muse" without cadence, in order the better to avoid any stress on the next word " *that,*" in the sixth line, which being repeated so soon as at the beginning of the eighth, has, if more than just heard, in its first place, the unpleasant effect of jingling; since, being the demonstrative pronoun in the second

place, it must be quite distinctly heard. The next cadence at "rose out of chaos," must be emphatically read, as the sense of the foregoing line wholly depends upon it. With regard to the cadence at the end of the sixteenth and last line of this exordium, the beauty and spirit of this first long period in the poem, contained in the exordium, would be lost, were the cadence not made with extraordinary animation.

It will appear that the second period of this divine exordium has been cited, *as well for the* sake of pointing out the necessary pauses in these latter lines, as for the nobly flowing cadence which crowns the whole.

Though Milton has disdained Horace's remonstrance on the pomp of exordiums,

"Quid dignum tanto ferat hic promissor hiatu?"

justly as it might be addressed to most

poets, who, that contemplates the sublimity of the British bard's flight through the whole poem, will venture to say, that *his lofty* exordium has led to his reader's disappointment?

SUGGESTION VI.

On Interrogative Sentences.

We must not omit to say something on interrogative sentences. Simple interrogatories are generally expressed by an elevation of the voice at the close of the period. But we very frequently find periods in part only interrogative, in which the question ceases before the sentence is terminated. In that case, though the voice has been elevated, and it may have been so more than once, yet something perhaps remains to be gravely observed, or affirmed, and the usual cadence, as before explained, will be

required at the full stop, or colon, as either may close the sense. The following are instances of both kinds of sentences. The five first are simply interrogative: the sixth is mixed, and ending with an observation; the voice falls at its close.

1. "And he asked the Scribes; what "question ye with them?"

2. "O! faithless generation, how long "shall I be with you?"

3. "How long shall I suffer you?"—Mark ix.

4. "If religion be false, why do we so "much?"

5. "If it be true, why do we not much "more?"

6. "Why have we just religion enough "to disturb us in our vicious practices; "which it will always do till we dis-"charge it, or them?"—*Seed's Sermon V.*

The following periods are wholly in-

terrogative, and that *thrice* in each period: they are from Dr. Hunter's "Sacred Biography," (Lecture 7.)

Speaking of the beasts, as if by peculiar instinct flocking to Noah's ark from the threatening storm, which precedes the deluge, the lecturer asks—

"1. How came they in a moment to "change their nature? to seek what "before they shunned? to forget all "animosity to each other?

"Whence is it, that the wolf dwells "with the lamb? the leopard lies down "with the kid? and the young lion and "the fatling together?"

Whatever difficulty there may be found in making our cadences distinctly heard in a large church, or other assembly, there can be none for the same purpose in the elevations of the voice at an interrogatory. Nothing further, therefore, need be added.

With respect to interjections, they being always dictated by passion, admiration, or some other strong feeling of the mind, nature is here so powerful and correct a teacher, that the management of the voice, how best to express them, wants no particular direction. But what a beautiful instance have we of the interjection in our blessed Saviour's address to the Holy City, in the twenty-third chapter of St. Matthew, v. 37.

"O Jerusalem! Jerusalem! thou, that "killest the prophets, and stonest them, "which are sent unto thee, how often "would I have gathered thy children "together, even as a hen gathereth her "chickens under her wings; and ye "would not!"

SUGGESTION VII.

Emphasis.

A FEW words shall now be offered on the topic of emphasis, as it affects every member of a sentence; though not quite so energetically as its close, or cadence. Since nothing, perhaps, has been better written on this great requisite of elocution, than Sheridan's observations upon it in his fourth lecture on the "Art of Reading," and I cannot convey my own sentiments upon it in a manner more luminous or appropriate, I will therefore

present them in the following passage of that ingenious author.

"Emphasis discharges, in sentences, "the same kind of office that accent does "in words. As accent is the link which "ties syllables together, and forms them "into words; so emphasis unites words "together, and forms them into sentences, "or members of sentences. As accent "dignifies the syllable on which it is laid, "and makes it more distinguished by the "ear than the rest; so emphasis ennobles "the word to which it belongs, and pre-"sents it in a stronger light to the under-"standing. Accent is the mark which "distinguishes words from each other, "as simple types of our ideas, without "reference to the natural relation in "which they stand to each other. Em-"phasis is the mark, which points out "their several *degrees* of relationship in "their various combinations, and the

" rank which they hold in the mind.
" Were there no accents, words would
" be resolved into their original sylla-
" bles: were there no emphasis, sen-
" tences would be resolved into their
" original words; and in this case the
" hearer must be at the pains himself,
" first of making out the words, and,
" afterwards, their meaning. Whereas
" by the use of accent and emphasis
" words and their meaning being pointed
" out by certain marks at the time they
" are uttered, the hearer has all trouble
" saved, but that of listening, and can
" accompany the speaker, at the same
" pace he goes, with as clear a compre-
" hension of the matter offered to his
" consideration, as the speaker himself
" has, if he delivers himself well.

" From this account it might appear,
" that emphasis is only a more forcible

" accent than ordinary laid upon the
" words, to which it belongs; and that
" it is exactly of the same nature, differ-
" ing only in degree of force; an opinion,
" which, to the great prejudice of elocu-
" tion, has too generally prevailed. But
" there is an absolute and constitutional
" difference between accent and empha-
" sis, as certainly there ought to be,
" which consists in this, that every em-
" phatic syllable, besides a greater stress,
" is marked also by a change of note in
" the voice. To shew the necessity of
" this, we need only observe, that the
" mind in communicating its ideas is in
" a continual state of activity, emotion
" or agitation, from the different effects
" which those ideas produce in the mind
" of the speaker; but also all the dif-
" ferent feelings which they excite in
" him who utters them. There must

" be some other marks beside words to
" manifest these; as words uttered in a
" monotonous state can only represent a
" similar state of mind, perfectly free
" from all activity or emotion. As the
" communication of these internal feel-
" ings was a matter of much more con-
" sequence in our social intercourse than
" the mere conveying of ideas; so the
" Author of our Being did not leave the
" intention of this language, as in the
" other case, to man; but stamped it,
" himself, upon our nature, in the same
" manner as he has done to the rest of
" the animal world, who all express
" their various feelings by various tones.
" Only our's, from the superior rank
" which we hold, is infinitely more com-
" prehensive; as there is not an act of
" the mind, an exertion of the fancy,
" or an emotion of the heart, which have

" not their peculiar tone, or note of
" the voice by which they are to be
" expressed; all suited, in the exactest
" proportion, to the several degrees of
" internal feeling."

SUGGESTION VIII.

Modulation of the Voice.

WHAT has been said leads naturally to that prime article in Clerical Elocution, in every species of elocution I might have said, "Modulation of the Voice." Cadences, indeed, interrogative elevations and emphasis, might seem to those who have attended little to the subject, to comprise the whole; but this is by no means the case. Modulation* includes a

* Mr. Thelwall's word "tune," by which he seems to mean "modulation," is not a happy term, and might lead to "whining." See Shakspeare's Midsummer Night's Dream for an applicable passage in "Pyramus and Thisbe."

great number of little but nice variations, inflections and gradations of tone, which no words, no definition can convey; nor, for attainment of it, can any precise rules be laid down. But the cause of all the delicate changes of voice, in which modulation consists, may be easily assigned. It is the complete understanding and feeling of whatever we read, or recite, or about which we converse; and nature alone dictates all its varieties. It is the grace and spirit of all just reading and speaking, and may be said to accompany, to guide and proportion every word the tongue utters, naturally to the occasion. Active, powerful and natural as this faculty of modulation is, it seems something wonderful, that it should ever be almost lost and stifled, as we find it often is, in those who have unfortunately contracted a habit of *monotony* in their earliest school. Dr. Franklin, in his Essay entitled

"Sketch of an English School," has well explained this matter. "When," says he, "our boys read English to us, we "are apt to imagine they understand "what they read, because *we* do, and it "is our mother tongue; but they often "read as parrots speak, knowing little or "nothing of the meaning. And it is "impossible the reader should give the "due modulation to his voice, unless his "understanding goes before his tongue, "and makes him master of the senti-"ment. Accustoming boys to read "aloud what they do not understand, is "the cause of those even, set tones so "common among readers; which, when "they have got a habit of using, they "find so difficult to correct; by which "means, among fifty readers we scarcely "find a good one. For want of good "reading, pieces published with a view "to influence their young minds, for

" their own and the public benefit, *lose* " half their force."

When these even and set tones approach to singing in the way which children, in a parish school, read their chapter in the Testament, and many a parish clerk makes his responses at church, we have bad reading in all its perfection. Though nothing so bad as this will be supposed ever to get into the desk or pulpit, these monotonous, set tones are too often heard there in the young deacon's noviciate, and rob his performances of all their due grace and spirit.

Since, however, vanity and self-estimation in those, whose sacred office it is to teach others the government of *all* their passions, ought not in themselves to remain so ungoverned, as to blind them to so great a defect in a professional department, as the want of modulation of voice

in the performance of the church services, whoever may be the young clerk, or student only, preparing himself for the Church, that shall happily, through hints from his friends, or impartial self-examination, become sensible of this defect in himself, and sincerely anxious to remedy it, he may undoubtedly succeed by daily and persevering practice of the following intimations.

First, shutting himself up, or, in the solitude of a sequestered walk, let him *talk to himself with earnestness*, on any domestic or ordinary topic; such as the giving directions to a child, or particular orders to a servant; fancying the person before him, and speaking aloud, as if actually so circumstanced; and he will perceive at once, what are the natural modulations of the human voice, which nobody loses, when engaged in earnest

and continued conversation with their friends. After a few minutes' practice in this way, let him resort to his pocket Testament, and read repeatedly some parable of our Saviour's, or any passage simply narrative in the Gospels, resolving to read it, as if addressing it to a friend or two, with whom he had been talking on the subject of reading. But, if at first afraid, after these soliloquies recommended, to trust himself with his Divine Master's discourses, from the fear of relapsing into the monotonous manner, in which, till this experiment, he had been used to read it, (in his college chapel, or elsewhere,) let him have recourse to some collection of familiar dialogues, or to any of Cumberland's best-written comedies. An hour's practice every day, followed up with resolution for a month or six weeks, would, it is presumed, effectually

restore him to nature, and enable him to transfer her natural "modulations" to all his reading.

But, it may be asked, whether we do not modulate differently in addressing a formal petition to a superior, or to an assembly on a public occasion? It may be answered, that, though our utterance will be slower and more distinct, and the tone in which we modulate more solemn, still, if we speak naturally, our modulations will be the same. In a word, all those delicate gradations in the elevations, falls and inflections of the voice in all their varieties, lying between the acuteness of the interrogation, and the gravity of the cadence, will, and ought to have place. If any reader, whom I suppose to have put the question above to himself, will open the Gospels at the fourth chapter of St. Matthew, and begin to read aloud from the twenty-third verse of that

chapter to the end of the beatitudes at the close of the twelfth verse of the next chapter, he will, in the difference between the narrative and the didactic or hortatory styles, exemplify to himself the answer I have given him, as to modulation, or tone of key.

To prevent the confusion or misunderstanding which may arise, if a clear distinction be not made between modulation and tone, since each, though springing from, and directed by our natural feelings, differs from the other, let a word or two be added, to state precisely what we mean here by tone; enough having been said on modulation. Persons, ever so little conversant with music, will conceive in what sense we use the word "tone," were it intimated, that the tone of voice in speaking or reading answers to the key, in which a musical air is principally composed. As in each of the different

notes in the octave, there is a different character of sound, since each note may become the key-note, in which to modulate; one, adapted to express "joy," another, "sorrow," a third, "awe," a fourth, "triumph," &c.; so in speaking or reading there are some tones which express "hilarity," others, "grief:" there are tones of "admiration," of "thanksgiving," of "supplication," of "remonstrance," of "threatening," of "defiance," of "fear," "contentment," "indifference," &c.: in short, tones characteristic of every passion, feeling and state of the human mind, and imparting its own character to our utterance, as long as the emotion or passion, &c. prevails, and is meant to be conveyed by the language we are using, whether in prose or verse; but the voice is, and ought, at the same time, to be modulated in that tone, or key, with all its proper varieties, which

may always be safely left to nature, where a monotonous habit of reading has not been unfortunately contracted. But enough has been suggested on these topics; and that so much may, perhaps, have been justly addressed to persons of learned education, to some even of brilliant talents and great acquisitions of knowledge, is surely to be lamented.

SUGGESTION IX.

On the Use of Action.

THE foregoing strictures will naturally lead to some expectation of the writer's sentiments upon "Action." This is a delicate topic; one, on which there may be more difference of opinion, than on any other, as an adjunct or accompaniment of Clerical Elocution. It is, nevertheless, pretty well agreed, that when action becomes theatrical, it is strangely misapplied in the pulpit. Theatrical action, the main excellence of which consists in giving bodily expression and

force to all the passions of the mind, which the mind itself cannot wholly express in words, is much too imitative and blustering for the pulpit; and when any thing like it is attempted there, it is worse than ridiculous.

Theatrical dramas are imitations of events, transactions and manners of real life. Now, that preacher would strangely forget, or misconceive his own province, who, in describing to his hearers the murder of Abel by his brother, should put his right arm into any action like that of throwing a stone; the weapon by which Cain probably accomplished his horrid purpose. Or were it an incidental topic in some discourse, to mention the King of Israel's rending his garments, on Naaman's delivering him his master's letter, desiring the leper might be healed of his malady; though an actor representing the King of Israel on the stage,

would, in the surprise and irritation arising from his misunderstanding, at first, the Syrian monarch's application, perhaps use the same violence on his personal attire, which the King of Israel did; the preacher whose action were any imitation of this passionate manœuvre, would sadly betray his insensibility to decorum.

Though precisely these injudicious instances may never have been verified in the pulpit, even by the action of certain fanatics, other instances scarcely less extraordinary have been, on undoubted authority, told of them.

But every thing of this sort, however proper on the stage, is not only out of character and absurd in the pulpit, but a certain mark of vulgarity of mind, and a total want of critical feeling and taste, such as will rarely, if ever, be found in persons regularly educated in our Universities.

Although the most accomplished orators of ancient Greece and Rome laid the greatest stress on action, and studied it as an indispensable branch of their profession, we must not forget that it was with them a technical accompaniment to forensic and senatorial eloquence; and its merit perhaps is still allowed in either of those departments; but if practised as an *art* for the pulpit, it would appear much too shewy and ostentatious; nor could it fail to draw so much of the young preacher's attention to his own person and manner, as to leave it questionable, whether he were so deeply earnest in the monitory doctrines he is addressing to his auditors, as he ought to be, and not rather acting a part. The least suspicion of this nature is sure to lessen their confidence, and in the same proportion, the right effect and impression of his discourses upon them.

He must in no case overstep the modesty of nature. If he uses little or no action, when conversing earnestly upon subjects really interesting to him, he will do best to abstain equally from it in preaching. His weight and dignity in the pulpit will rest much more safely on simplicity, and a feeling seriousness of manner, than on any thing approaching affectation; of which action, wholly artificial, will always savour. If, on the other hand, he has been accustomed in warm conversation to use action, though nature be his only teacher, he may trust himself to her influence in preaching.

The action I have chiefly alluded to has been that of the hands and arms; for no one who merits the name of a preacher, or is fit, in the clerical character, to ascend a pulpit, can surely be so

unanimated, or rather inanimate,* as not to have some little gesture of body; some expression of meaning in his eye, when addressing a large assembly of christian people on the awful topics, which involve their eternal salvation. Let him gently (I fear to say gracefully) turn his head in the course of every long period to different parts of his congregation; nor will an easy bending of his body from the waist, (while not drawing his stomach inward, or projecting his chin,) be inconsistent with that gene-

* Recitantium verò præcipua pronuntiationis adjumenta, oculi, manus præpediuntur: quo minùs mirum est, si auditorum intentio languescit nullis extrinsecus aut blandamentis capta, aut aculeis excitata.—*Pliny.*

Motus est corporis gestus, et vultûs moderatio quædam, quæ pronuntianti convenit et probabiliora reddit ea quæ pronuntiantur. Hoc scire tamen oportet, pronuntiationem id perficere, ut res animo agi videatur. —*Cic. ad Herranium*, lib. iii.

ral uprightness of his person before recommended, as aiding the energy of the voice.

Though it be advisable, perhaps, to let the sermon remain before him on the pulpit cushion, that his hands may be at liberty for moderate action, let them but seldom be spread forth both together, lest due sobriety of movement should ever be forgotten, or terminate in gesticulation or unseemly grimace.

If, from nearness of sight, or from habit not easily conquered, he must hold his sermon in one hand or the other, let him do it in either alternately; but never so high as to conceal his visage; for the countenance of every honest man is meant the faithful ally of the heart, and is always ready to assist what is passing there. The preacher will still

have one hand left constantly free, to follow his feelings and emotions, and that to be lifted up, spread forth, or laid upon his breast, as occasion may demand.

But, above all things, let him, by repeatedly previous readings, be as thoroughly master of his discourse, as if it were newly written; so that it may not be necessary for him to pore over it in public, as if he were learning or recollecting a lesson. For if such be his want of all sensibility to the dignified predicament, in which a Christian minister presents himself to his audience, it matters little if he stand wrapped up in himself, as cold and motionless as a statue; since his discourse, however well-composed, if it be dryly read, like a school-boy's lesson, will leave no impression but that of sound upon the ear,

and disappoint whatever expectation had been formed to the preacher's advantage, or of profit to themselves among his hearers.

SUGGESTION X.

On moving the Passions.

ELOCUTION having been largely* defined a proper and effective manner in the public delivery of any thing perspicuously written, and justly adapted to its occasion; and something, as would be naturally expected, having been suggested on the use of action, an intimation or two may now be looked for on the subject of "moving the passions." This effect of Clerical Elocution depends partly on the delivery, but more on the

* See Suggestion I.

composition of a sermon, while its author is writing under any of those feelings of the heart, or affections of the mind, usually termed "the passions."

Should a young divine, having chosen a subject on which he thinks the passions, or rather some particular passion in his audience might be addressed, sit down coolly to write with a fixed intention or resolution of producing that effect, it is but too probable, he would not succeed; and that passages, written directly with that view, would be less affecting than affected; and such, as betraying his design upon his auditors, would, for that very reason, disappoint his own expectation. But if, in meditating closely upon his subject, without any such direct intention at first, and proceeding to write, he finds his own passions become earnestly moved under some particular topic, circumstance, or event which it

offers to his thoughts, that which then flows naturally from his pen will move his hearers, if delivered with simplicity and feeling. Quintilian has so happily expressed my present ideas, that I cannot do better than resign them to his words: "Summa enim (quantum ego sentio) circa movendos affectus in hoc posita est, ut moveantur ipsi. Nam et luctus et iræ et indignationis aliquandò ridicula fuerit imitatio, si verba vultumque tantùm, non etiam animum accommodaverimus. Quid enim aliud est causæ, ut lugentes utique in recenti dolore disertissimè quædam exclamare videantur; et ira nonnunquàm in indoctis quoquè eloquentiam faciat, quàm quod illis inest vis mentis, et veritas ipsa morum. Quarè in iis quæ verisimilia esse volemus, simus ipsi similes eorum, qui verè patiuntur, affectibus: Et à tali animo proficiscatur oratio, qualem facere indicem volemus. An ille dolebit, qui

audiet me, hoc cum dicam, non dolentem? Irascetur, si nihil ipse, qui iram concitat, idque exigit, simile patietur? Siccis agenti oculis lacrymas dabit? Fieri non potest." Instead of the words "indicem" and "agenti," let us substitute "audience" and "preacher," and nothing can be more applicable than the passage just cited, to the preacher's province, when he would move the passions.

The famous and eccentric Mr. Sterne, in his Sermon on the "Good Samaritan," could never have produced the following truly pathetic passage, had he not, while writing, been under the most impressive feeling of compassion, and so absorbed in it, as, in imagination, to have believed himself beholding the traveller, who had fallen among thieves, and witnessing the Samaritan's whole proceeding of charitable commiseration and humane assistance. "As he approached the place," says the

preacher, " where the unfortunate man " lay, the instant he beheld him, no " doubt some such train of reflections as " this would rise in his mind :——Good " God! what a spectacle of misery do I " behold!—a man stripped of his rai- " ment, wounded——lying languishing " before me on the ground, just ready to " expire;—without the comfort of a " friend to support him in his last ago- " nies, or the prospect of a hand to close " his eyes, when his pains are over.— " But perhaps my concern should lessen " when I reflect on the relations in which " we stand to each other—that he is a " Jew, and I, a Samaritan. But are we " not both still men?—partakers of the " same nature, and subject to the same " evils? Let me change conditions with " him for a moment, and consider, had " his lot befallen me, as I journeyed in " the way, what measure I should have

" expected at his hands. Should I
" wish, when he beheld me wounded,
" and half dead, that he should have
" shut up his bowels of compassion from
" me, and have doubled the weight of
" my miseries, in passing by, and leaving
" them unpitied? But I am a stranger
" to the man—be it so—I am no stranger
" to his condition. Misfortunes are of
" no particular tribe or nation, but belong
" to us all, and have a general claim
" upon us, without distinction of climate,
" country, or religion.—Besides, though
" I am a stranger to him, it is no fault
" of his, that I do not know him, and
" therefore unequitable that he should
" suffer by it. Had I known him, it is
" possible, I should have had cause to
" love and pity him the more.—For
" aught I know, he is some one of un-
" common merit, whose life is rendered
" still more precious, as the lives and

" happiness of others may be involved in " it. Perhaps at this instant that he lies ' here forsaken in all this misery, a whole " virtuous family is joyfully looking for " his return, and affectionately counting " the hours of his delay. Oh, did they " know what evil had befallen him, how " would they fly to succour him! Let " me then hasten to supply those tender " offices of binding up his wounds and " carrying him to a place of safety,—or, " if that assistance comes too late, I " shall comfort him at least in his last " hour,—and if I can do nothing else, " I shall soften his misfortunes by " dropping a tear over them."

All men under the actual feeling of any passion represent with truth, I might, perhaps, rather say, warmly paint to their own imaginations at least those objects which relate to the feeling which occupies them. Close meditation on the

subject chosen by the preacher, just previously to composing his discourse, or already engaged in earnestly writing upon it, may produce the same effect. It may be said to brood over his thoughts and dispose them to fecundity. Let us suppose them to turn on that passage in St. Mark,* where the Apostle tells us, our Saviour was "asleep on a pillow in "the hinder part of the ship, when "there arose a great storm of wind, and "the waves beat into the ship, so that it "was now full." While contemplating the circumstances of all that is passing in the air and the water; black clouds intercepting the sun; the bellowing of the winds; the swell, the foam and roar of the waves; the vessel at their mercy alternately borne on their highest surges, and sinking into the abyss; the disciples all on deck, with hands and eyes uplifted,

* Chap. iv. 37—41.

imploring aid of their Almighty Saviour, still fast asleep; is it possible, I would ask, that the preacher, involuntarily raising like them his hands and eyes, and, with terror unfeigned in every lineament of his visage, loudly exclaiming, "Master! carest thou not that we perish?"—should not, at the moment, inspire his auditors with all the alarm and despair of his agonized disciples?

But in contrast to all this confusion, fright and agitation, what attitude of body, what expression of countenance in man shall pourtray the tranquil majesty of the Son of God, in his miraculous rebuke of the ocean?—"Peace! be still!" when the storm instantly subsided, "and there was a great calm!"

On the subject of moving the passions, I might much enlarge this section, and bring before the young Clerk their whole train, as admirably exhibited in Aristotle's

Poetics; but his own academical reading will have anticipated all I might say. But my object is sufficiently accomplished, if these few intimations shall succeed, to excite him to apply his learning and knowledge to the study and practice of "Clerical Elocution," with such earnestness as may enable him to do justice to the sacred profession he has embraced.

SUGGESTION XI.

Conclusive.

It might be attended with effects extensively beneficial, were some worthy person, in the benevolence of his zeal for the honour of religion, learning and genius, to make a posthumous bequest for an annual public reading of Milton's Paradise Lost, in each of our Universities. This is undoubtedly the most difficult work in our whole language to be properly read. Whoever were sufficiently practised in the art of reading or recital to perform that task before an academical audience, could never fail in the province

of "Clerical Elocution," or of recital, whether in poetry or prose, in any department. It cannot but be supposed, that any scholar able to read this divine poem in the manner it ought to be read, would *à fortiori* be qualified to give general satisfaction in the recital of any prose composition. Every younger student desirous of self-improvement from such a performance would do well, as soon as returned home from it, to recite aloud to himself the same portion of the poem, which he heard publicly read, and that repeatedly.

May it not be conceived, that the emulation, exertion, and spirit of criticism on the art of reading, which the proposed exhibition should seem calculated to excite, might prove the means of bringing elocution of every kind to its highest perfection; and, in the clerical view of it, give new splendour to the functions

of the Church; greatly augment their impression on the people, and consequently advance the best interests of religion.

But could the author flatter himself, that the heads and tutors of our colleges would condescend to honour this Suggestion with their attention, there would be no necessity of waiting the improbable event of a testamentary bequest. A proper subscription on the part of numbers, who, it is likely, would attend so delicious a species of entertainment, would alone suffice for its adoption.

Let us suppose the reader appointed to this enviable distinction to have taken holy orders, and to be a master of arts, of two or three years' standing. Of the candidates, who should offer themselves, the senate at Cambridge and the convocation at Oxford, might elect the reader by ballot. The Senate-house in one

University, and the Theatre in the other, might be adapted to the purpose. A month in full term time would suffice, at three readings in each week, for the recital of the whole poem.

Should something on this plan, capable as, doubtless, it is of improvement, be ever adopted, no visitor hereafter on the banks of the Cam, in allusion to any supposed neglect or fancied oblivion of our divine poet, and his "Paradise Lost," shall exclaim, as if o'er the mouldering relics of some obscure peasant in a country church-yard—

"Some *mute* inglorious Milton here may rest."

No—let the great bard, through some well-chosen organ, nobly break silence in the strains of his lofty poem, addressed to the ear of that "Alma Mater" who once fostered his sublime genius. Let him, as if disdaining the silent perusal of the closet,

be annually recited by the most accomplished orator, before a learned and critical audience, under every circumstance of liberality and distinction, in that University at least, on which his academic education will ever reflect immortal honour.

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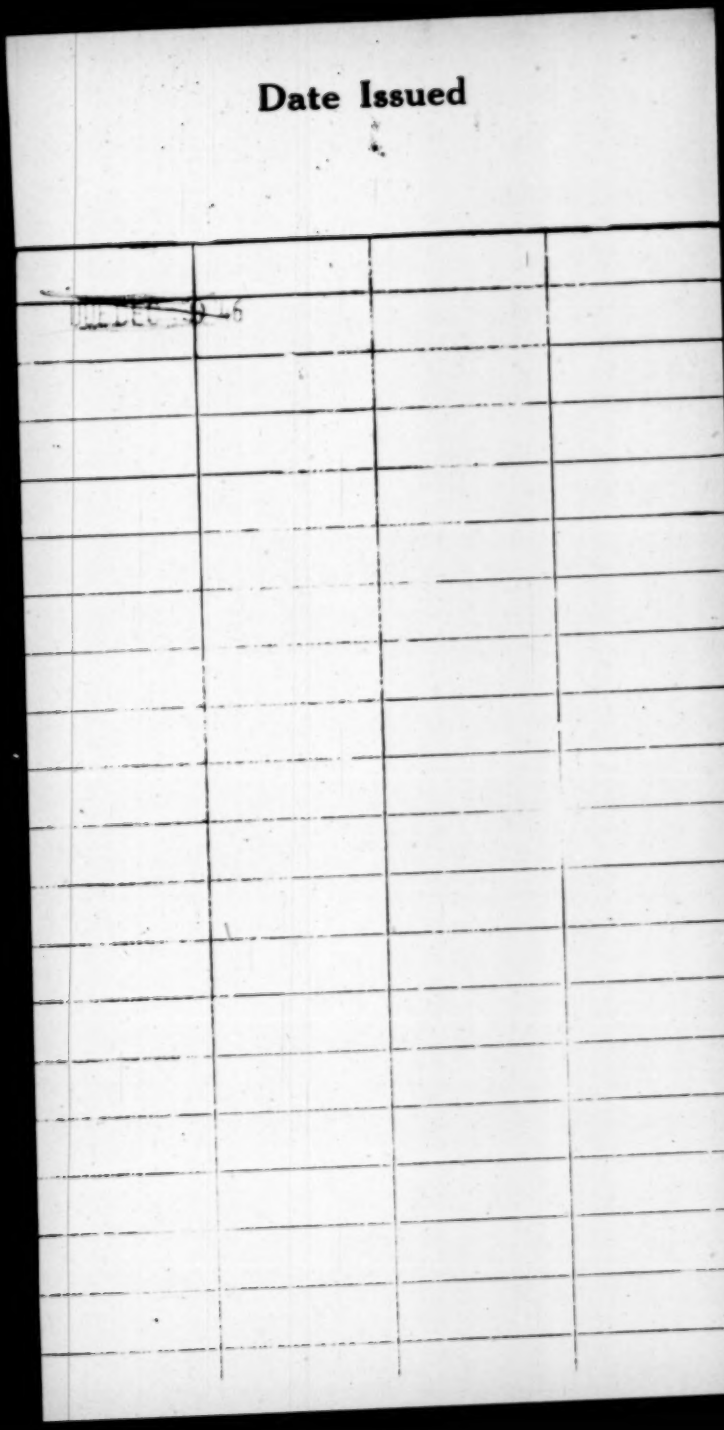
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